WEISS-RYESKY FAMILY

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21 May 2004

The Honorable Michael F. Mullen
Acting Supreme Court Justice
210 Center Drive
Riverhead, New York 11901

Re: *People v. Stephen Manolis*

Dear Justice Mullen:

This is neither a plea for lenity nor a demand for severity. The purpose of this letter is to apprise of how the crime for which the subject defendant now stands convicted has affected our community in East Northport, so that Your Honor might impose an appropriate sentence.

Other than our residence in the community where the crime occurred, our personal connection to the case is quite detached and attenuated. We do not know the Defendant or his family. The victim was only known to us most casually, more by face than by name, as the young lady who sometimes tended the cash register at the now defunct fruit and produce establishment where she was gainfully employed. As for the victim's family (who are being provided a copy of this letter), though we have for the past seventeen years lived in the same community we have yet to meet them; a function of divergent interests, routines, habits and acquaintance circles, and surely not on account of any animus or aversion. We accordingly have no particular axe to grind, nor agenda to assert, except to inform Your Honor of the crime's impact upon our community.

At the time the victim was murdered, we resided approximately three-quarters of a mile from the scene of the crime. Our son, like other 7-year-olds, had begun to take an interest in personally exploring a wider range of his neighborhood. Prudence compelled us, as concerned parents, to restrict and monitor our son's excursions from the homestead property more stringently than we otherwise would have had the crime not occurred.

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Our weekly religious Sabbath occurs from sundown Friday until Saturday evening. During that period, we and other members of our religious congregation in the community refrain from certain activities, including the use of automobiles. Prior to the Defendant's arrest, our congregation assemblages for religious and/or social activity during our Sabbath and religious holidays, which must be facilitated through travel by foot, were curtailed, particularly in the evening hours, due to fears for personal safety on account of the crime in the neighborhood.

Within a year after the murder, our family began a quest for roomier quarters. It would be gross exaggeration to state that the then-unsolved crime actually deterred us from looking in the vicinity of the murder, for indeed, we affirmatively sought out the neighborhood on account of its many positive attributes. It is no exaggeration, however, to say that we were mindful of the horrible killing even as we looked at homes within a few blocks of where the victim met her untimely death (including the one, a mere few hundred yards away, which we eventually purchased and in which we now reside). And, of course, our concerns for our son's safety (and our own) were amplified by the closer proximity of our new house to the crime scene.

There is yet another negative impact the crime has had upon our community and elsewhere, less obvious but no less detrimental. As brought out before and during the trials, the cognizant law enforcement officers and the victim's family made a strategic decision to put a low public profile on the investigation of the crime. Such strategy, though quite effective, came at a price. Amidst the dearth of any news reports on the status of the investigation, it was natural and logical for members of the public to entertain notions that, just maybe, the victim's family themselves were being considered as possible suspects. And though it now is crystal clear that the bereaved relatives of the victim were most certainly *not* complicit in her death, this was nevertheless an additional undeserved indignity to the Scarabelli family (even if they were not conscious of it), and an indignity as well to those in the community and elsewhere whose thoughts were beclouded by even a momentary fleeting shadow of such a horrible suggestion.

By all accounts of those who knew the victim, the Defendant's crime has cost our fine community a promising, contributing and worthy member. Our collective community spirit of well-being was also compromised, a species of damage which, while intangible and unquantifiable, is no less real.

There indeed is much to recommend that mental health professionals ought attend to the Defendant. But whether for therapeutic purposes, or punitive purposes, or some combination of the two, the people of East Northport now need to know that Stephen Manolis will be placed under the appropriate supervision and control of the appropriate officials at an appropriate facility for an appropriate duration of time. Mr. Manolis's

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crime has adversely affected the community at large, even those of us who had no significant connection to Kristin Scarabelli or her family.

We implore Your Honor to recognize and regard our community's tribulations, and to weigh the same in determining an appropriate sentence for Mr. Manolis.

Yours sincerely,

The Weiss-Ryesky Family

Kenneth H. Ryesky, Esq. Dr. Tamara E. Weiss

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